

Post to The Daily Breeze

The purpose of a Community Design Overlay (CDO) is to make a business district have eye appeal, look inviting and make people feel safe and comfortable as they come to eat and shop in that area. Sometimes the verbiage that is used to get this concept across ends up defeating the intended purpose of having a CDO. This project is a good example of this happening. I worked on creating the CDO with Kevin Jones and the reason for having the requirement of no drive-throughs in the CDO was to avoid the typical drive-through restaurants that were being built at the time this CDO was written, such as the Taco Bells of the world.

The CDO encourages sidewalk dining. This has been attempted with some of the restaurants along Sepulveda Blvd. but has not been that successful because they have not been well-designed to be inviting to sit and eat on the sidewalk. Chick-fil-A has designed a beautiful patio for dining that abuts the sidewalk, that is inviting and is destined to be a benchmark for other sidewalk dining in Westchester. They have designed the drive-through behind the patio, which makes it not visible from Sepulveda Blvd.

This property is one of the welcome mat properties to the Westchester town Center BID and sets the tone of the shopping center's environment.

The property owner testified at the public hearing that his alternative to this Chick-fil-A project is to have a VIP parking lot for LAX. He is ready to go with that project should the Chick-fil-A not be approved.

When one takes a look at the number of benefits Chick-fil-A has agreed to provide the community, which are many, and the benefits that the VIP Parking lot provides the community, which is **ZERO**, it is a perfect example that the CDO can defeat its purpose to exist.

John Ruhlen